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ABSTRACT

The fifth of eight related documents, this monograph describes in detail the function of the counseling personnel in the Reading Instruction and Pupil Personnel (RIPPS) program. The duties of the counselor, who is the liaison between the student and the remaining staff members, and the functions of the social worker are outlined. Schematic diagrams indicate how the counselor may enlist the services of other staff members, such as teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, or nurses. An appendix provides a brief history of a child whose problems warranted input from all available services. (HTH)

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PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

MONOGRAPH 4

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RIPPS
READING INSTRUCTION & PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES

OFFICE OF GRANT PROGRAMS
PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND 02871

Graphics and Layout by Richard Carbotti

7/77

Prepared by the RIPPS Demonstration Project.

Acknowledgment is made to the staff and personnel of the RIPPS Program who gave generously and unselfishly of their time in the preparation of this monograph.

Some of the photographs used in this brochure were specially posed by James Edwards, son of Mr. and Mrs. John G. Edwards of 2409 East Main Road, Portsmouth, R.I.

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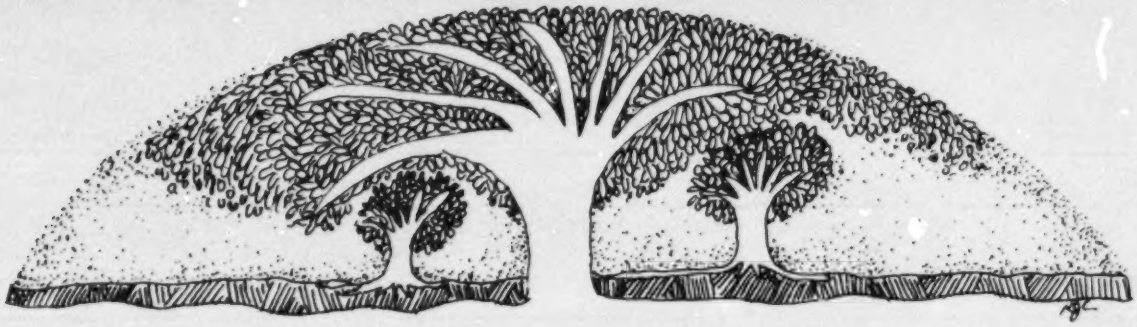


The RIPPS program is comprised of two components: reading services and pupil personnel services. This interdisciplinary team operates as a whole, each contributing to insure a total service to children in need of reading help. Research supports the fact that there are often many reasons impeding a child's progress, adjustment, and personal success. The RIPPS program is especially effective because it deals with the WHOLE child.

This monograph will deal with the pupil personnel aspect of the RIPPS program. Included in this are the full time services of the project coordinator, guidance counselors, social worker and case aide (who assists the social worker) and project secretary. On a part time basis the services of clinical psychologist and a child psychiatrist are available. Also available to RIPPS, are the services of the Regional Diagnostic Team, which is a satellite clinic of the R.I. Child Development Center. This provides the services of an additional psychologist, pediatrician, and child psychiatrist.

These services are used with children in the reading program who are in need of some type of intervention other than remediation. The effects of these services are felt throughout the whole school system, as each child relates to another, and as the input helps teachers develop and refine their skills and techniques in the guidance area.

When a student is accepted into the reading program, he is concomitantly eligible for pupil personnel services. The link between the child and guidance services is the *COUNSELOR.*

THE COUNSELOR IS THE LIAISON WHO ORGANIZES AND ASSEMBLES ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION AND HELPS THE STAFF AND FAMILY DESIGN A PROGRAM FOR THE CHILD.

A child is observed by the Counselor in classroom, playground, and special subject class, in large group, small group and transitional situations. Through an interview with the child, which might include brief testing, the Counselor begins to form an hypothesis as to what the problem is and individually designs a plan of action to apply appropriate intervention.

Previous records and testing are gathered. The Counselor accumulates information from the school staff (which includes classroom teacher, reading teacher, principal, nurse, speech teacher, special subject teachers).

At this time the Counselor:

1. Makes a recommendation to be carried on by any or all members of the staff. A follow-up meeting is planned to review progress and for the Counselor to present new information gathered by other members of the RIPPS staff.

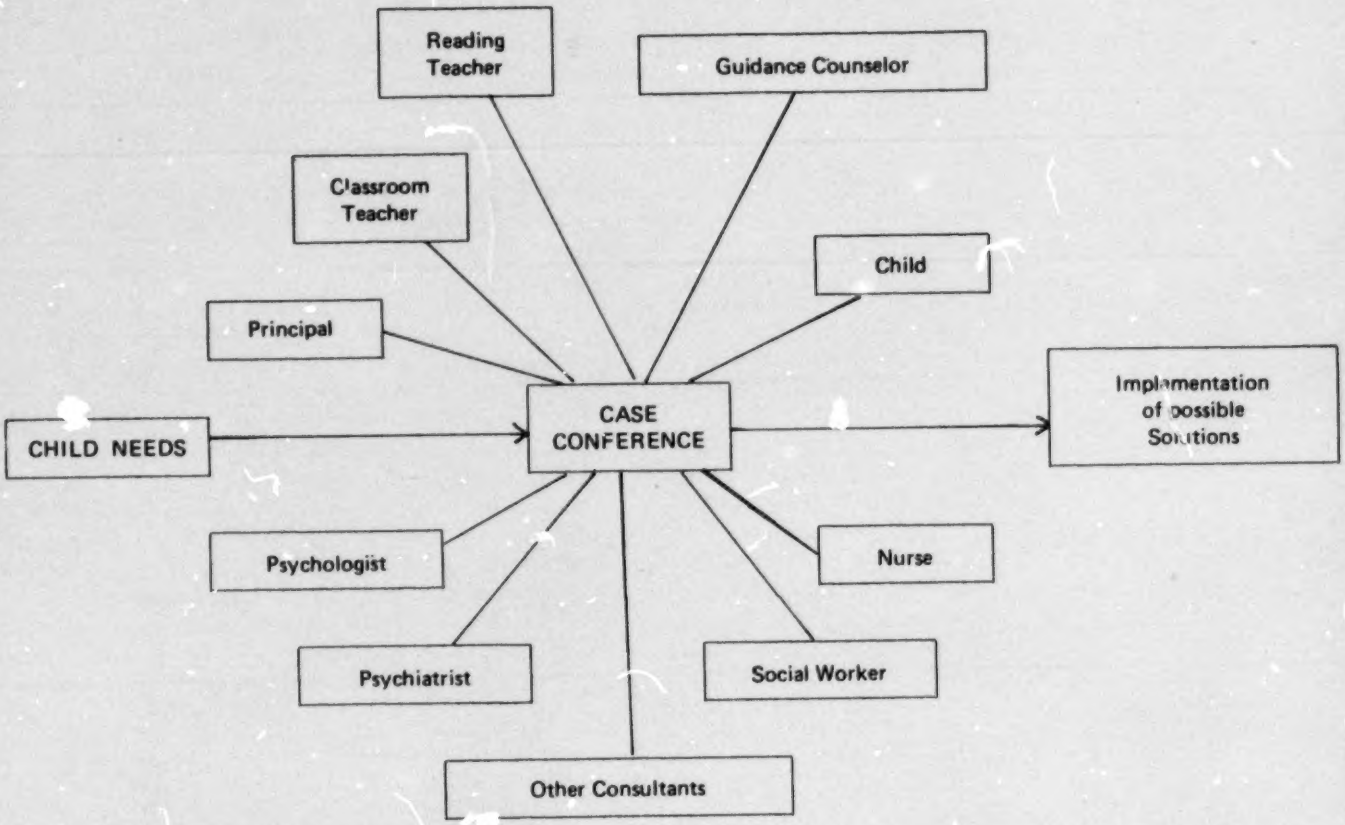
2. Gives a descriptive analysis to the Social Worker.

The Social Worker visits the home, explains the program, obtains a developmental history, asks the parents if they see any unmet needs, and enlists their help in understanding their child in his learning situations.

When it is felt that more information is needed to understand a child's potential, self-concept, and interpersonal dynamics, the child is referred to the Consulting Psychologist. From his findings and recommendations, suggestions can be made to the school staff (by the Counselor) and to parents (by the Social Worker).

In limited cases, a child's problems might be so complex that a staff meeting is set up with the consulting child psychiatrist. He interviews the child and parents, and with input from the staff, helps in understanding the dynamics and needs of the particular situation and suggests recommendations for the school and home, which are then carried out with the help of the counselor and the social worker.

The contact between the home and school often improves the parent-child-school relationship, and the concerted effort of home and school does *much* toward understanding and improving many existing situations.


Reading Teacher
Guidance Counselor
Classroom Teacher
Child
Principal
CHILD NEEDS
CASE CONFERENCE
Implementation of possible Solutions
Psychologist
Nurse
Psychiatrist
Social Worker
Other Consultants

Many parents join parent study groups (conducted by the Project Coordinator). These groups train parents in child rearing techniques and foster a positive working relationship between home and school. The parents gain a better understanding of the child in the school situation and learn how they can cooperate in more meaningful ways with the school (See monograph on Parenting).

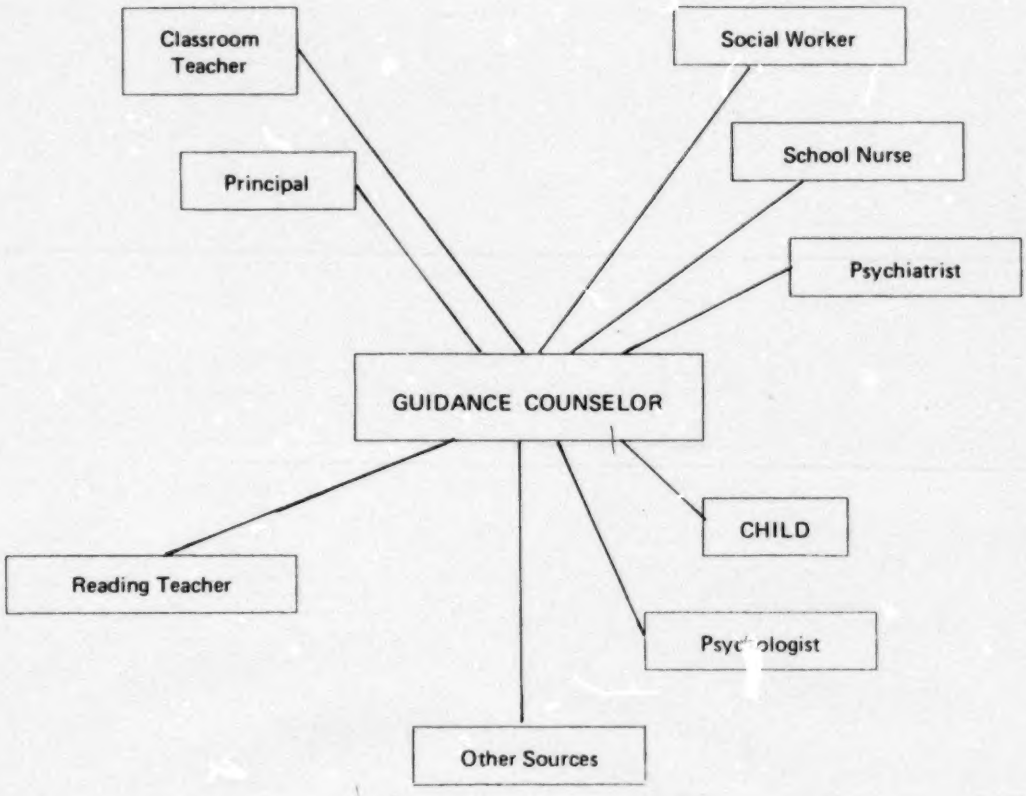
At times, it is appropriate to make referrals outside the RIPPS department, such as the Regional Diagnostic Team, Agencies for Counseling Services, Centers for Educational Testing, Centers for Neurological Examination, Physicians, and Big Brother/Sister.

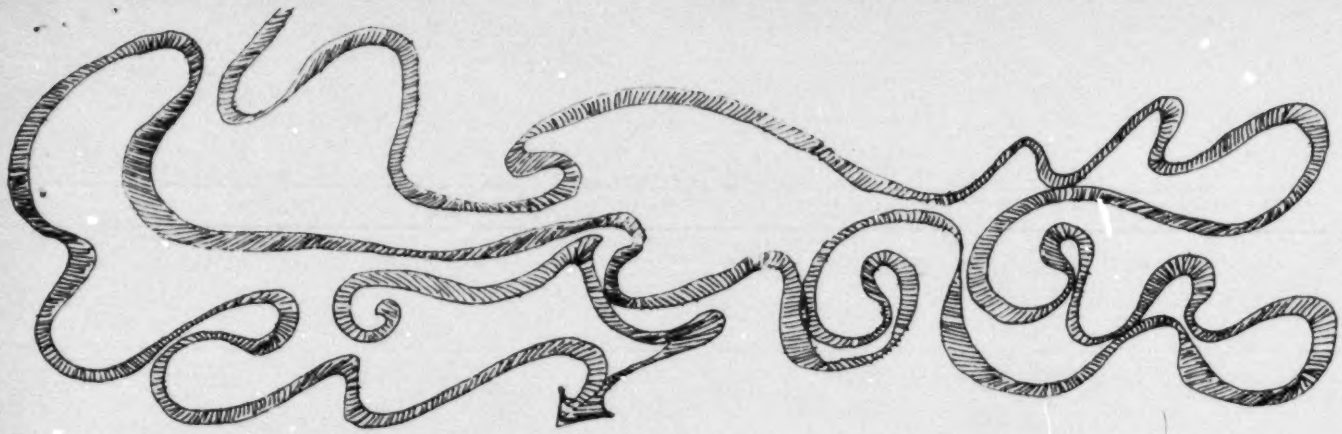
The Pupil Personnel Services approach is multi-disciplinary; a team using the skills from various disciplines as the child's need indicates. The guidance information is handled in a confidential manner and is not included in the child's regular permanent folder. Written parental permission is requested for individual testing and the purpose of requests is explained fully.

The guidance counselor is usually the contact person with the school, and the Social Worker with the home. This assures an even flow of information and planning with a minimum of staff.

In summary, there are three dimensions to the role of Counselor: "Counselor", "Consultant" and "Referral Agent". The "Counselor" deals with individual counseling, Crisies Intervention, Group Counseling, Developmental Counseling, Counseling Child and Counseling Adult. The functions involved in the role as "Consultant" and "Referral Agent" have been discussed in the monograph.

It should be noted that the Counselor is involved not only in the child's social/emotional development, but also is concerned with his academic performance, work habits, and motivation. The Counselor helps the staff individualize a program for a student and get him "ready" for learning.





Functions of the Social Worker include:

1. Making regular home visits and requesting parent's suggestions, interpreting psychological testing results, providing case work services, making referrals to other community agencies.

2. Exchanging information and planning with guidance counselors regularly and occasionally directly with teachers and other school personnel.

3. Securing testing releases and explaining the need for testing, the way it is done, what it can tell us and giving the information relating to a particular child.

4. Arranging for individual psychological testing.

5. Preparing information for case conferences, preparing information for and sending to psychiatric consultant.

6. Interviewing parents of Head Start children and seeing that their needs are met.

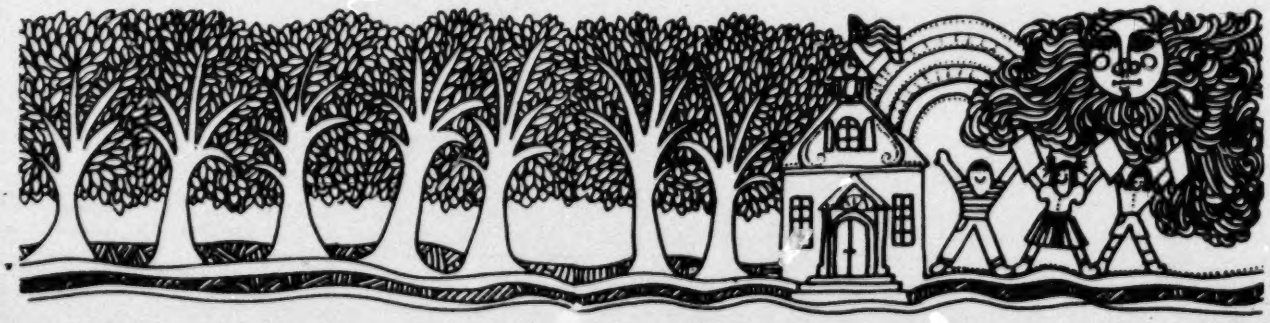
7. Meeting with persons from other agencies regarding referral of our children and keeping track of progress.

8. Attending and contributing to Regional Diagnostic Team case conferences.

9. Contacts with doctors, clinics, and public welfare workers.

10. Explaining our reading-guidance program in detail to parents and making them aware of services available to them within the schools, such as the Parenting Workshop (See monograph on Parenting Skills).

The RIPPS program, through an interdisciplinary team, offers an individualized approach in both the cognitive and affective domain and attempts to influence all factors which contribute to a child's successful development in the educational process – intervening at critical times at any significant place in the child's developmental process, working with the most significant people in his life and attempting to supply the need of the moment, be it instructive or affective.



APPENDIX

The extensive services available to students in the RIPPS program are not needed by every student in the program. However, there are cases where some students experience difficulties such that most or all available services are needed. Pat, a second grader was one of those students in need. The following United States Office of Education release focuses on Pat, his problems, and the measures undertaken by the RIPPS team to solve his problems:

Pat, a second grader in the Portsmouth, R. I. public schools, was in trouble. He didn't like school, he wasn't completing his assignments, and he spent much of his time bothering other children.

A check with his mother quickly revealed the problem. The school social worker found that Pat had undergone several traumatic experiences in recent months — his grandmother had died and so had his dog and a five year old playmate. Pat had become obsessed with death and was frightened.

His mother was eager for help. She agreed to take part in a study group at the school to try to find out how to cope with the situation. Here she came to realize that she had never explained death satisfactorily to the child. Also, she found he was being naughty and "scared" mainly to gain attention. (There were five other children at home and 29 others in the classroom.)

Through the cooperation of school and home, the problem was solved as quickly as it was recognized. Pat grew more confident, and his school work improved. He is no longer on the list of underachievers.

The program that put Pat back on target bears the rather complicated title of Reading Instruction and Pupil Personnel Services (RIPPS). Actually, it's anything but complicated. It simply combines good reading practice with good sense. It pairs the reading specialist with specialists in other fields who can help locate outside problems and help solve them.

"Children don't read for many reasons," says Phyllis Martin, program coordinator. "It may be something emotional, physical, instructional – you name it."

If it is a matter of instruction, the reading teacher working with the classroom teacher can handle it. But if it is something else, perhaps and emotional problem like Pat's, other specialists are needed. That's when the RIPPS team comes into action. On the team are the reading teachers, counselors, social worker; and a clinical psychologist and psychiatrist who serve as consultants when needed.

Together, they seek out the problem and provide assistance. In Pat's case it was simply to discover his frustration and get the parent to work with the school. But it might also have required the assistance of an outside agency which the parent may not know about. If this is the case, the connection is made and that agency also offers assistance.

Pat's mother found help in one of the parent study groups run by the RIPPS program. Here parents learn of the many skills required in parenthood. They are taught how to ease tensions caused by death, divorce, or a birth in the family. They learn the importance of developing self-confidence in children.

One of the biggest problems faced by teachers today – not only in Portsmouth but all over the country – is the "failure syndrome." Kids who aren't very good students spend their days proving it.

"But both the teachers and parents can turn things around by building up the self-concept of these children," says Ms. Martin. "If you believe they can succeed – and tell them – the kids will actually try harder and will achieve."

Parent involvement has helped bring about some changes in the Portsmouth Title I schools. It has aided in opening the schools to the community.

"Parents feel free to call the school about their problems. They know that together we can iron it out," Ms. Martin says.

There are approximately 350 children in the RIPPS program which offers remedial reading instruction to children in grades K through 10.

In existence since 1971, RIPPS has substantially raised the reading performance of its children. So successful is the program that parents often complain when their children move out of the program and no longer get this special attention.

Its success has also led to its adoption through grade 10 in the Portsmouth schools. In the upper grades, it too is working – not only to increase reading scores but to decrease the absentee and dropout rates.

Because of its fine record of success – 85% of the pupils show a month's gain for a month's instruction – the RIPPS program has been cited by the U. S. Office of Education as one of the 150 exemplary education programs across the nation.